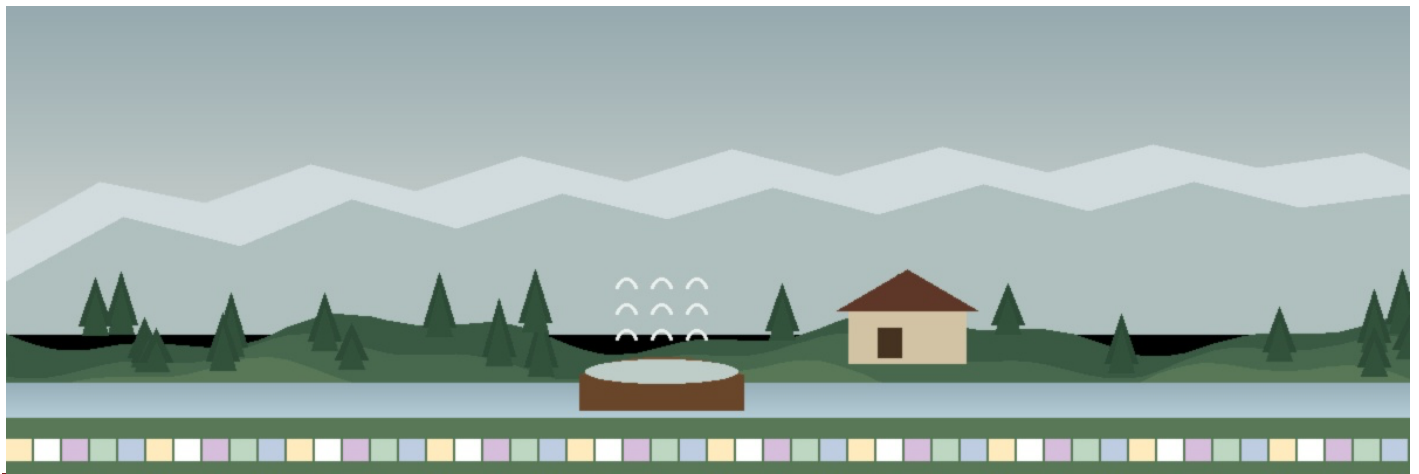




SHANGRILA EXPEDITIONS

presents

MENJONG

A Wellness Sojourn Through Bhutan, the Land of Medicine

7 DAYS · THIMPHU — PUNAKHA — PARO · A SOWA RIGPA WELLNESS JOURNEY

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Bhutan has long called itself Menjong — the Land of Medicine. Its high valleys are one of the richest reservoirs of medicinal plants in the Himalayas, and its healing tradition, Sowa Rigpa — the 'Science of Healing' — has been practiced here since the 8th century, formalized under royal command in 1616 and woven into the national healthcare system since 1967. At its heart is a simple idea: the body is governed by three forces — lung (wind), tripa (bile), and beken (phlegm) — and true wellbeing comes from keeping them in balance. This 7-day journey pairs that living tradition with three of Bhutan's finest boutique wellness resorts. You will sit with a menpa, a traditional physician, for a personal reading of your own constitution; move through medicated oil massage, herbal compress therapy, and hot stone baths; and close the week with a hike to Tiger's Nest and a take-home formulation built around what you have learned about yourself along the way.



7 Days
Duration



3,100m
Max Elevation



Easy–Normal
Difficulty



Mar–May, Sep–Nov
Best Seasons



2 Personal Readings
Menpa Consultations



3 Boutique Retreats
Wellness Resorts



8+ Included
Traditional Therapies



Personal Formulation
Take-Home Care



This retreat offers an immersive cultural experience in traditional Bhutanese wellness practices, guided by trained menpa. It is designed for relaxation and rejuvenation, and is not a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment.

YOUR 7-DAY WELLNESS JOURNEY

DAY

1

Arrival: Paro → Thimphu | Elevation: 2,350m



Arrive at Paro International Airport, received by your Shangrila Expeditions team, and begin the drive to Thimphu with unhurried riverside stops along the way.



Suja welcome at a Paro farmhouse — Bhutan's traditional salted butter tea, offered alongside a gentle walkthrough of the week ahead and what to expect from each therapy and consultation.



Brief stop at Simtokha Dzong — Bhutan's oldest surviving fortress, built in 1629 by the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the founder of the Bhutanese state.



Check in to Terma Linca Resort and Spa — a Bhutanese-owned riverside retreat on the banks of the Wangchu, built around organic gardens and traditional Bhutanese architecture.



Opening consultation with your menpa (traditional physician) — a personal reading of your constitution through pulse assessment, the same diagnostic method used in Sowa Rigpa for centuries, setting the direction for your week's therapies.



Ku-nye medicated oil therapy at the resort spa — a warm, oil-based massage rooted in Sowa Rigpa's external therapies, easing travel fatigue and settling the body after your journey.



Welcome meal, thoughtfully paired to what your consultation revealed about your constitution.

DAY

2

Thimphu — Into the Living Tradition | Elevation: 2,350m



Dawn kora (walking meditation) at Changangkha Lhakhang — one of Thimphu's oldest and most revered temples, its circumambulation path quiet and unhurried before the city wakes.



Visit the National Traditional Medicine Hospital — see pulse and urine diagnosis conducted exactly as it has been for generations, fully integrated into Bhutan's national healthcare system (visit arranged in advance).



Visit the Faculty of Traditional Medicine — where menpa and drungtsho (senior traditional physicians) train for years in this living science, part of a formal degree program since the 1970s.



Visit Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals — the national compounding facility where raw Himalayan herbs, many gathered from Bhutan's own high-altitude meadows, become the formulations used in your treatments this week.



Hor-me herbal compress therapy at the resort spa — heated bundles of medicinal herbs and butter pressed along the body's energy pathways, easing muscular tension and encouraging circulation.



Dietary guidance session — a menpa's assessment of foods to favor and avoid for your specific constitution, building directly on your Day 1 consultation.



Evening calming practice on the banks of the Wangchu — a quiet close to a day spent inside the tradition itself.

DAY

3

Thimphu → Punakha | Elevation: 1,300m



Visit Dochula Pass and its 108 memorial chortens at 3,100m — built by the Queen Mother, and on clear mornings offering an unbroken view of the eastern Himalayas.



Forest immersion at the Royal Botanical Park, Lamperi — a protected sanctuary of rhododendron and blue pine, ideal for slow, quiet walking among the trees.



Lakeside tea at Lamperi, held as silent sitting or gentle meditation — a pause built into the pace of the day rather than around it.



Descend into the warmer Punakha Valley and check in to Dhensa Boutique Resort — meaning 'Heavenly Abode', set among pine forest overlooking the river and terraced rice paddies.



Forest hour within the property — sauna or quiet sitting at the resort's spa cottage, with its own outdoor wood-fired bath tucked into the pine trees.



Dinner at the resort.

DAY

4

Punakha — Valley of Balance | Elevation: 1,300m



Guided breathwork beside the Mo Chhu — using the sound of the river as an anchor, a practice aimed at settling lung, the 'wind' element Sowa Rigpa associates with the breath and nervous system.



Hike to the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten — a gentle climb through golden rice terraces to a hilltop temple built by the Queen Mother, with sweeping views over the valley.



Descend and cross the Punakha Suspension Bridge — at some 160 metres, one of the longest of its kind in the kingdom, strung with fluttering prayer flags above the river.



Farmhouse lunch with a short dietary practicum — seeing your dietary guidance from Day 2 applied to real, home-cooked Bhutanese dishes.



Visit Chimi Lhakhang, the beloved Fertility Temple, associated with the 'Divine Madman' Drukpa Kunley — a short, easy walk through the rice fields.



Menchu medicinal herbal bath — a soak prescribed to your own constitution, using a herb mixture selected by your menpa specifically for you.



Butter lamp offering to close the day — a simple dedication practice, a moment of quiet gratitude before dinner.

DAY

5

Punakha → Paro Hills | Elevation: 1,300m



Early entry to Punakha Dzong — arriving before the tour groups, at the dramatic confluence of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers, winter seat of Bhutan's Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot).



A gentle float on the Mo Chhu — calm water, quiet valley walls, and little else to do but notice the scenery drift past.



Return over Dochula Pass, then continue up into the forested hills above Paro.



Check in to Naksel Boutique Resort and Spa — its name means simply 'Forest' in Dzongkha, perched above the Paro Valley with views to Mount Jumolhari and, in the distance, Tiger's Nest itself.



Medicinal herb walk above Paro with your menpa — learning to identify sngo-sman, the medicinal plants that underpin the formulations you have been receiving all week, growing wild on the hillside.



Wild plant infusion — brewing and tasting what you gathered together on the walk.



Restorative Yin practice, followed by a briefing for tomorrow's hike to Taktsang — pacing, breath, and what to expect on the climb.

DAY

6

Paro — Tiger's Nest & Recovery | Elevation: 3,100m



Early breakfast, then drive to the trailhead for Taktsang Monastery — the ascent begun in silence, held all the way to the first viewpoint.



Visit Tiger's Nest and its inner chapels, including a seated meditation practice inside one of the monastery's meditation caves — where Guru Rinpoche himself meditated in the 8th century.



Butter tea at the halfway house on the descent — the traditional recovery drink of salt, fat, and warmth, exactly suited to a body that has just climbed and is now coming back down.



Late lunch back at the resort.



Dotsho hot stone bath — river stones heated over fire and lowered into a wooden tub with khempa (medicinal leaves), Bhutan's centuries-old answer to a hard day on the trail.



Ku-nye recovery massage, tailored to ease the specific muscles worked by the day's climb.



Closing consultation with your menpa — a review of the week, and a compounded herbal formulation prepared specifically for you to take home.



Farewell dinner at the resort.

DAY

7

Departure — Carrying the Balance Home | Elevation: 1,900m



Final sunrise practice — the same breathwork sequence from Day 4, this time unguided, as your own to carry forward.



Visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of Bhutan's oldest temples, dating to the 7th century — a quiet, unhurried close to the week.



Time in Paro town for herbs, textiles, and souvenirs — a good moment to pick up a further supply of the herbal formulation your menpa prescribed.



Transfer to Paro International Airport for your departure flight, carrying home a formulation, a set of practices, and a clearer sense of your own constitution.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR PACKAGE



3 nights across Terma Linca, Dhensa, and Naksel resorts



Opening and closing menpa consultations



Personal take-home herbal formulation



Private ground transportation with professional driver



Expert English-speaking Shangrila guide throughout



All meals (breakfast, lunch & dinner) throughout



Ku-nye, Hor-me, Menchu, and Dotsho therapies



Visits to the Traditional Medicine Hospital and Faculty



All monument, museum, and site entrance fees



Bhutan visa processing and Sustainable Development Fee (SDF)

WHY TRAVEL WITH SHANGRILA EXPEDITIONS?

“Wellness in Bhutan is not a spa treatment layered on top of a holiday — it is a national institution with its own hospitals, university faculty, and centuries of refinement. Our relationships with real menpa and Bhutan's leading wellness resorts mean you experience Sowa Rigpa as the Bhutanese do: personal, precise, and rooted in an understanding of your own constitution, not a generic treatment menu.”

✓ Real menpa consultations, not generic spa menus

✓ Access to national institutions rarely open to visitors

✓ A personal take-home formulation, built around you

✓ Three of Bhutan's finest boutique wellness resorts

✓ Culture and wellness woven together, not bolted on

✓ Bhutan's High Value, Low Impact philosophy at every step

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Tour prices quoted in USD per person. Rates vary by season. This retreat is a cultural wellness experience and does not replace medical advice.